3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

was her home. She made such a pretty picture as she smiled to us in greeting that I took out my camera and snapped her, saying as I did so "*Qurqmaselar.*" ("Don't be afraid"), for I was accustomed to the shyness of the women of the plains which renders a natural (i.e. unposed) photograph of them so difficult to obtain. To our surprise she tossed her head and said "I'm not afraid of men!" and then and there she chatted pleasantly to us for a few minutes, holding the lamb in her arms all the while, asking us all about ourselves and gossiping about Merket and the Amban's visit. On another occasion we noticed a Dulani woman digging in a field of heavy clay with great energy, while her husband strolled along behind the plough-bullocks close by. As for the town, the men there seem to leave everything to the fair sex, and a picture comes to my mind of a blacksmith's forge with a woman toiling away at the bellows with one hand and holding a horse-shoe in the fire with the other, while her husband and two other loafers sat by looking on. It was an astonishing sight, every time we issued from our Chinese rest-house just outside the bazaar, to see rows and rows, not of women and children as at Keriya but of full-grown men lining the railings waiting for us to come out; I counted seventy-two of them on one occasion, and hardly a single woman.

The standard of living as well as of morals among the Dulanis is noticeably lower than among the Turkis; thieving is rife, witness the watch-dogs which seem to average about three per house. They are also an exceedingly quarrelsome and vindictive race, in contrast to the easy-going, good-natured Turki. A Dulani will do anything to hurt an enemy. It is a regular thing for one who has a quarrel with another to threaten to kill his child or himself "at" his enemy, i.e. in order to bring bad luck on him, and sometimes he does it, too. The extraordinary thing is that the Chinese recognize the custom, and usually give judgment against the party "at" whom the child-murder or suicide was committed! They argue that the person who committed suicide or killed his child must have been seriously wronged, otherwise he would not have taken so dreadful a step. In a case I heard with the Amban of Maralbashi one of the main issues, argued at great length, was whether the plaintiff, who had attempted to kill himself by swallowing an over-dose of opium, had done so "at" the defendant, or, as the latter maintained, "at" a third party.

During our stay at Merket an important "international"